

Lambda Letters Project

32601

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www.lambdaletters.org

LambdaLP@aol.com

(916) 965-6851

Ten Easy Things You Can Do

The Lambda Letters Project, with the marvelous support of its members and friends, delivered over 63,000 letters to our elected officials in just the first six months of 1998. It is now quite possible that we will deliver over 100,000 letters by the end of the year. This would more than double the record of any previous year. Thank you for your part in making it all possible.

There are a number of easy things that you can do to ensure that we do, in fact, deliver at least 100,000 letters by years end:

1. Sign your sample letters, or compose and sign your own versions of the letters, and promptly return them to Lambda Letters for counting and delivery.
2. If you have access to the Internet, and are not now receiving our legislative e-mail alerts, e-mail us. We will keep you informed of fast-breaking legislative events where your input to legislators is needed.
3. If you are receiving our e-mail alerts, copy and forward them to the e-mail addresses of your friends. Urge them to respond to the alerts and to

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The Problem with Welfare Reform

A key provision of the welfare reform laws passed by Congress and many states in the past few years allows people to remain on welfare for no more than a certain limited number of years. That number varies depending on circumstances, but for many people the time limit is five years.

Once a person has reached the specified time limit, he or she is prohibited from ever receiving welfare again. The problem with this is that certain people are also prohibited by the federal government from ever obtaining permanent, paid employment.

You don't believe this last sentence, do you? But consider the following. On June 21st Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan testified before Congress that he was concerned about the low rate of unemployment in the United States. He said that such low rates of unemployment contribute to inflationary pressures.

He added that if the rate of unemployment continued at such low level, the Federal Reserve Board might find it necessary to increase interest rates charged by the Federal Reserve and by the banks that borrow from the Federal Reserve. This would increase unemploy-

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Lambda Letters Progress Report

Letters Collected

June, 1998	10,179 letters
In all of 1998	63,223 letters

Dollars Spent

June, 1998	\$1,027
In all of 1998	\$8,234

Can You Help?

Please support the very important work of the Lambda Letters Project with your contributions.

Lambda Letters Project

Statement of Purpose

To promote people of color, feminist, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and HIV/AIDS status advocacy, and to bring people of color, women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgendered persons, and persons affected by or living with HIV/AIDS into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof.

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 Vice-Chair: Alan Beach, San Francisco, (415) 431-8344, alanrbs@aol.com
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 Larry Beaty, Carmichael, (916) 965-6851, lambdalp@aol.com
 Michael Butler, Antelope, (916) 722-6301, mbutler@gvn.net
 Lynn Dobbs, San Diego, (619) 275-5343, partners@access1.net
 Ray Leber, Sacramento, (916) 925-5368
 Scott Roy, Upland, (909) 985-7652, roykit@aol.com

Staff

Administrator: Boyce Hinman, (916) 965-6851, lambdalp@aol.com
 Newsletter Editor: Stefan Grünwedel, (650) 655-3154, s-t-e-f-a-n@earthling.net
 Legislative Analyst, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender Issues: Hilary Cook, (619) 260-0561, hcook@earthlink.net
 Legislative Analyst, HIV/AIDS Status Issues: Randy Allgaier, San Francisco AIDS Foundation, (415) 487-3000
 Legislative Analyst, People of Color Issues: Vacant
 Legislative Analyst, Women's Issues: Carla Leek, (916) 442-5169
 Database Manager: Charles Penn, (916) 663-4951, cpenn@foothill.net
 Webmaster: Lynn Dobbs, San Diego (619) 275-5343, webmaster@lambdaletters.org
 E-mail Alert Advocate, Federal AIDS Issues: Joe Heller, (520) 762-9787, jrheller@dakotacom.net

Publication of the name of any person or organization in articles or advertising in the Lambda Letters Project newsletter is not to be construed as any indication of the sexual orientation of such person or organization.

The Lambda Letters Project does not sell or loan its mailing list to anyone. We give no information about who is, or is not, a member of the Project. We do, occasionally, send mailings on behalf of other worthwhile organizations, but this is done by our own volunteers so that no other organization has the opportunity to copy our mailing lists.

The Lambda Letters Newsletter is published monthly except in December by the Lambda Letters Project Inc., 6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, CA 95608.
 Postmaster: send address changes to the address above.

Advertising Rates

Business-card sized ads (3½" x 2") \$10 per issue,
 quarter-page ads \$20 per issue, half-page ads \$30 per issue,
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 along with your name and phone number, is the 25th of each month.

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Have you experienced employment discrimination because of your actual or perceived sexual orientation? If so, you may register a complaint with one of the following Division of Labor

Standards Enforcement district offices.

Bakersfield (805-395-2710)	Eureka* (415-557-7878)
Fresno (209-248-8400)	Long Beach (310-590-5044)
Los Angeles (213-897-4037)	Marysville (916-741-4061)
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Sacramento (916-323-4920)	Salinas* (415-557-7878)
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San Francisco* (415-557-7878)	San Jose* (415-557-7878)
Santa Ana (714-558-4111)	Santa Barbara (805-963-1438)
Santa Rosa (707-576-2363)	Stockton (209-948-7770)
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*These cities share an office.

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Fighting Back Against Workplace Discrimination

by Hilary Cook

A.B. 2156 is in the home stretch. This is the bill which extends the filing time for a discrimination complaint under the Labor Code from 30 days to one year. While most groups are protected under Fair Employment and Housing (FEHA) legislation, discrimination based on sexual orientation falls under the Labor Code, which offers less protection and a very short time in which to respond.

Votes on A.B. 2156 have so far been pretty split along party lines, with the Democrats supporting it, and so it is expected to pass the Senate. The pressure is on to convince Governor Wilson not to veto this valuable bill.

Currently the Labor Code allows for limited remedies (such as reinstatement and back pay), has no provision for public education, and has such a short time limit on filing a complaint that an employee could easily have it run out while on vacation or looking for a new job.

As mentioned above, A.B. 2156 extends the deadline to one year (the same as for FEHA claims) and requires employers to post an FEHA-style notice in the workplace.

An earlier bill this year, A.B. 257, would have added sexual orientation to FEHA but it was vetoed by Governor Wilson. A.B. 2156 is now making its way to the governor's desk and has a chance of becoming law. This would ensure that most employees know that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals are protected by law in the workplace, and that people who are discriminated against, either because of their real or perceived orientation, would have a reasonable time to respond.

Please sign the letter to Governor Wilson asking him not to veto this important bill.



Combating Immigrant Bashing

by Boyce Hinman

On this year's survey of our member's legislative priorities, those members who indicated they are people of color chose access to culturally sensitive and affordable health care as their number-one priority among people of color issues. This month's people of color letter fits right into that priority.

Governor Wilson plans to impose burdensome immigration screens on a variety of programs that are critical to the health of our most vulnerable residents: seniors, persons with disabilities, and children. Some two hundred medical care and social services programs would be affected.

The affected programs provide services for people with developmental disabilities, including diagnosis, personal care, emergency and crisis intervention, and physical and speech therapy. Other affected programs provide support and treatment for people with Alzheimer's disease, services to students in need of special education, long-term care for people with chronic disabilities, care for children and adults with genetic diseases (such as cystic fibrosis, hemophilia sickle cell disease, etc.), and care for chronic health problems or traumatic injuries.

Before receiving services from the affected programs, people would have to provide documentation of their citizenship status. No doubt care providers would then have to verify the documentation and complete various forms. Apparently even noncitizens who have the right to live and work in this country might be

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Silence is the virtue of fools.

— Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

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Opposing Mandatory Names Reporting

by Randy Allgaier,
San Francisco AIDS Foundation

Please write a letter to the your state senator opposing mandatory HIV names reporting and supporting A.B. 1663 (Migden), which would implement a non-names-based HIV reporting system in California. We encourage you to compose your own letter or you may simply sign the enclosed sample letter. Either way, please return the signed letter to Lambda Letters for counting and delivery.

Recently the *San Francisco Examiner* ran an editorial from the *Providence Journal Bulletin* that congratulated the New York State Legislature for passing legislation to institute mandatory HIV names reporting and mandatory partner notification for people who are HIV-infected. The *Sacramento Bee* and *Fresno Bee* have published similar editorials.

In California, Assemblywoman Carole Migden (D-San Francisco) is authoring a bill, A.B. 1663, that would implement an enhanced HIV reporting system that is non-names-based. Such a system would provide necessary information on the epidemic without deterring people from testing and treatment. This legislation is supported by a broad coalition of public health officials and HIV advocates.

If you decide to write your own letter, here are some points you could discuss about A.B. 1663.

Studies on HIV names reporting have shown a deterrent effect on HIV testing:

- ♦ A 1995 survey done in HIV testing centers in Los Angeles showed that 86 percent of participants would not have been tested if they knew that their names would be reported to the government.
- ♦ A 1997 study of gay and bisexual men seeking testing in anonymous test sites in San Francisco found that 68 percent would not be willing to get tested if their name would be reported to the government.

In general, these studies have shown that those at highest risk for HIV infection are most likely to

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Helping the Sex Equity in Education Act Become Law

by Carla Leek

In January, Lambda Letters wrote to encourage our state legislators to pass the Sex Equity in Education Act. With your help, the bill passed the Assembly on January 29th, in a very close vote (41-37). The bill has made its way through Senate committees and will be voted on by the Senate soon.

A.B. 499 was introduced by Assemblymember Sheila Kuehl (D-Encino) to simplify, clarify, and strengthen California's commitment to equal opportunity in the public schools. Those of us who remember Title IX (from the 1970s) are also probably aware that inequities based on gender still exist in California's public schools.

According to the California Education code, "It is the policy of the State of California to afford all persons in public schools, regardless of their sex, ethnic group identification, race, national origin, religion, or mental or physical disability, equal rights and opportunities in the educational institutions of the state." A.B. 499 clarifies this policy, increases enforcement activity, and provides legal remedies if discrimination occurs. To compete in the global economy of the 21st century, every California student needs every possible opportunity to succeed. There is no room in our classrooms for discrimination based on gender—or any other human feature, for that matter.

Please sign the enclosed letter encouraging your senator to support A.B. 499.

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State Legislative Update, Part IV

This is the fourth of a series of articles to inform you of the progress of both good and bad bills through our state legislature. We have been successful in moving many of the good bills and stopping some of the bad bills. The flow of your letters and e-mail messages to our state legislature has been much greater than usual this year (63,000 pieces of mail by June 30th) and we think that has something to do with our success in the halls of the state legislature. Thank you for doing your part in our community's effort.

Typically each bill is voted on by two committees in the State Assembly and two in the State Senate, and approved by the full Assembly and Senate, before it is sent to the governor for signature or veto. The first committee is a policy committee which, in theory, determines whether the bill makes sense from a policy viewpoint. The second committee is an appropriations committee that determines whether the expenditures are reasonable and that the money for the bill is available.

According to the rules of the legislature, each bill had to be approved by the relevant policy committee of its *second* house no later than July 3rd. For example, A.B. bills, which originate in the Assembly, must have been approved by the full Assembly and sent to the Senate and approved by the relevant Senate policy committee by that date. There are always exceptions, but generally any bill that fails to meet that deadline is dead.

There are two more deadlines. Bills that do make it to the second house of the legislature and are approved by the policy committee in that house must be approved by the appropriations committee in the second house by August 14th. Then the final day for bills to be approved by both houses of the legislature and sent to the governor is August 31st.

Here is a list of some of the bills we have been working on. (Note: This article was written on July 23rd, before some of the hearings for the bills in the following list.)

HIV/AIDS Issues

A.B. 20 Carole Migden, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To provide that people living with AIDS, and who return to work, continue to receive Medi-Cal health coverage until they become eligible for health insurance under their employers' plans.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Assembly and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

A.B. 1663 (Carole Migden, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To require the state to conduct studies of unique identifier systems of tracking the spread of HIV that do not require the reporting of the names of people who test positive for HIV.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly. Passed by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in August.

A.B. 2737 (Dion Aroner, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To create the Supportive Housing Fund to provide housing for homeless and other very low income and disabled persons, including those with AIDS.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and the Senate Local Government Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in August.

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MELINDA M. WHITEWAY
Attorney and Counselor at Law

Whiteway Law Offices

143 Sacramento Avenue
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Ph: 408/458-2545
Fax: 408/458-3516
Email: MELINDAMW@aol.com

Legislative Update

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A.B. 2762 (Dion Aroner, D-Oakland)

Purpose: To require the state to request a waiver from the federal government to allow the state to use Medi-Cal funds to care for poor, HIV-positive people who do not have full-blown AIDS. Currently they must have full-blown AIDS to receive Medi-Cal benefits.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 3rd.

S.B. 705 (Richard Rainey, R-Walnut Creek)

Purpose: To criminalize the "intentional" transmission of HIV through unprotected sex.

LLP Position: Oppose.

Status: Has passed the Senate and all Assembly committees. Is in the inactive file on the Assembly floor. Author is discussing amendments to it to get enough votes for passage.

L/G/B/T Issues

A.B. 1059 (Carole Migden, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To require that all health insurance companies that offer policies covering employees and their spouses also offer coverage for employees and their domestic partners. Does not require employers to buy coverage for their employees' domestic partners.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed both houses of the Legislature. Pending on the Assembly floor for the Assembly to vote on changes made to the bill in the Senate.

A.B. 1999 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Encino)

Purpose: To amend the states Hate Crimes Statistics Act by adding gender and defining gender to include transgendered people. Provides stiffer penalties for hate-motivated crimes based on gender and gender

identity. Requires the counting and reporting of such hate crimes.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly. Passed by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 3rd. Chances of approval and signature by the governor appear good.

A.B. 2156 (Fred Keeley, D-Santa Cruz)

Purpose: To strengthen the California Labor Code sections that prohibit sexual orientation-based employment discrimination. Increases the deadline for filing a complaint from 30 days to one year. Requires employers to post notices that sexual orientation-based employment discrimination is illegal and to display a list of offices at which complaints may be filed.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly. Passed by the Senate Industrial Relations and Senate Appropriations Committees. Now goes to the Senate floor.

People of Color Issues

A.C.A. 3 (Kevin Murray, D-Culver City)

Purpose: To allow the state to take any measures necessary to enhance equal opportunity in California.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: In Assembly Judiciary Committee. No date set for hearing yet. Note: A.C.A. 3 is a proposed constitutional amendment. Constitutional amendments do not have to meet the deadlines discussed above.

A.B. 1532 (Kevin Shelley, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To authorize state grants to cities and counties to establish interpreter programs to assist the police in serving non-English-speaking crime victims. Has been changed to add funding for public defenders, which dilutes its purpose of helping non-English-speaking crime victims.

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Legislative Update

Continued from page 6

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and by the Senate Public Safety Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 3rd.

A.B. 1784 (Joe Baca, D-San Bernardino)

Purpose: To provide \$10 million to fund substance abuse programs for adolescents in the ten counties with the most at-risk adolescents.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by Assembly. Approved by Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing on August 3rd.

A.B. 1815 (Carole Migden, D-San Francisco)

Purpose: To exempt certain limited-English-proficient students from taking the achievement test, which is given in English, and which is otherwise required by the state.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and by all Senate committees. Awaiting final vote on the Senate floor.

A.B. 2015 (Roderick Wright, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To require school districts to distribute teachers of different experience and credentials equitably through all schools in the district.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee. Awaiting a vote in the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

A.B. 2031 (Gilbert Cedillo, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To prevent the governor from denying access of legal resident aliens to many state-funded health programs for the poor.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by Assembly and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Now in Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in August.

A.B. 2171 (Antonio Villaraigosa, D. Los Angeles)

Purpose: To make immigrant children eligible for the Healthy Families state health insurance program regardless of when they entered the country.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Assembly and the Senate Health

and Human Services Committee. Will be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee on August 3rd.

A.B. 2421 (Mike Honda, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To ensure that all immigrants maintain eligibility for state housing programs. This is essential to keep immigrant families from being evicted or separated from one another.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and by the Senate Local Government Committee. Will be heard in Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

A.B. 2463 (Antonio Villaraigosa, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To provide State SSI and Food Stamps to legal immigrants.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Assembly and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Now in the Senate Appropriations Committee for a hearing in August.

S.B. 34 (John Vasconcellos, D-San Jose)

Purpose: To guarantee that all low-income women, regardless of immigrant status, have access to state prenatal care programs.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Senate and the Assembly Health Committee. Will be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee in August.

S.B. 1226 (Diane Watson, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To state legislative intent to reduce public dependency by creating new public or community service jobs programs for transitional welfare recipients.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Senate and the Assembly Human Services Committee. Will be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee in August.

S.B. 1398 (Tom Hayden, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To make immigrant children eligible for the Healthy Families state health insurance program regardless of when they entered the country.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Senate and the Assembly Health Committee. Will be heard in Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 5th.

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Legislative Update

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S.B. 1500 (Richard Polanco, D-Los Angeles)

Purpose: To outlaw the manufacture, import, sale, possession, or loaning of unsafe guns.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Senate and by the Assembly Public Safety Committee. Now in Assembly Appropriations Committee. Hearing date cancelled by the author while he negotiates content of the bill with the governor.

Women's Issues

A.B. 499 (Sheila Kuehl, D-Encino)

Purpose: To systematize and strengthen the state education code, particularly as it relates to discrimination, including sex discrimination.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly and the Senate Education Committee. Assembly Member Kuehl had to make changes to the bill to get it out of the Senate Education Committee. Now in the Senate Appropriations Committee. No hearing date set yet.

A. B. 1112 (Bob Hertzberg, D-Van Nuys)

Purpose: To require HMOs and insurance providers to cover the cost of prescription contraceptives. To get the governor's support, the bill has been amended to allow some employers who have a religious objection to contraception to provide for their employees' group health plans that do not cover contraceptives. In these cases employees who earn up to 400 percent of the poverty level would be permitted to purchase health coverage that does cover prescription contraceptives from a state-funded family planning program.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed Assembly and Senate. Sent to governor for signature.

A.B. 1926 (Scott Wildman, D-Glendale)

Purpose: To limit the ability of defense lawyers to put rape victims

on trial by claiming that the victim's clothing was an invitation to have sex.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed both legislative houses. Signed by the governor.

A.B. 2592 (Howard Wayne, D-San Diego)

Purpose: To use tobacco taxes to fund prevention and treatment of breast cancer, with special emphasis on low-income, Native American, and minority women.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed by the Assembly. Passed by Senate Health and Human Services Committee. Next stop Senate Appropriations in August.

S.B. 487 (Hilda Solis, D-El Monte)

Purpose: To provide loans for the construction or rehabilitation of low-cost housing for people receiving welfare. The housing is to be near public transit, and have on-site child care and job training.

LLP Position: Support.

Status: Passed the Senate and the Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development. Scheduled for a vote in the Assembly Appropriations Committee on August 5th.



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Let Us Know When You Move

Four times a year we add the endorsement "Address Service Requested" to the envelopes used to send you your monthly newsletter and sample letters. This endorsement causes the post office to send us the new addresses of members who have moved from the addresses shown on our mailing list. The post office also forwards our mailings to the members' new addresses.

We started adding the endorsement this year because we appeared to be losing many members when they moved and forgot to send us their new addresses. Most of them wanted to continue participating in Lambda Letters, but we could no longer find them. The endorsement solves the problem.

However, it does cost us. The post office charges us 50¢ for each address change notification. Typically we spend about \$10 in each of the four months that we use the endorsement. That's money that could be applied to activism if we didn't have to spend it at the post office. Therefore, please let us know promptly when you move.

Large-Print Version of Newsletter Available

Are you or a friend visually impaired? Do you or your friend find it difficult to keep up on all the latest issues because it's hard to read our newsletter and sample letters?

We may have the solution for you. Lambda Letters now issues versions of our newsletter and sample letters that are printed in a

Where We Need to Grow

Lambda Letters is glad to welcome new members from any part of California. However, we are particularly anxious to find new members in certain key counties. These are the counties represented by state legislators who received mediocre scores on the Legislative Score Card issued by Lambda Letters last fall. We hope that by increasing the right kind of constituent mail to those legislators, we might persuade them to vote the right way more often.

The key counties are as follows: Alameda, Alpine, Amadore, Butte, Calaveras, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Lassen, Los Angeles, Madera, Modoc, Mono, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, San Benito, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Sierra, Tulare, Ventura, Yuba.

If you have friends in those counties, please tell them about Lambda Letters and urge them to join.



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Ten Easy Things You Can Do

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- sign up to receive our alerts directly.
4. Tell your friends about Lambda Letters and persuade three of them to sign up for our postal mailings or to receive our e-mail alerts. (You will find a list of counties in which we particularly want new members in the article called "Where We Need To Grow" on page 9.)
 5. Send a short letter to the editor of your local lesbian gay, bisexual, or transgender newspaper with information about Lambda Letters and how people may join. Ask the paper to publish your letter.
 6. Make an announcement in your women's group, political club, church or other friendly organization telling people about Lambda Letters and how they may join.
 7. Send us a list of the names and addresses of people who tell you they would like to join Lambda Letters.
 8. Put an announcement in the newsletter of any of the organizations to which you belong.
 9. Ask us for a supply of Lambda Letters brochures and place them in your community center, church, political club, or other friendly organization or business.
 10. Suggest to your local gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, women's or ethnic newspaper or newsletter that they use Lambda Letters as a news source. They can do this by checking out our Web site (www.lambdaletters.org) or by signing up to receive our e-mail alerts.

Become an Advocate!

Become our people of color advocate and help us choose one subject a month (usually a piece of legislation) that is of concern to the people of color community. You'll spend only about 10–12 hours a month researching possible subjects and composing letters and articles. Do you have Internet access? Lambda Letters can provide leads on sources of information and advice on composing letters and articles. This exciting position enables you to have a direct impact on legislation that affects our daily lives.

Welfare Reform's Problem

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ment and thus reduce the chance of inflation resulting from people having too much to spend.

With some exceptions, people on welfare generally have the fewest job skills. As a result they are usually the last to be considered for hiring. Therefore, the unemployment rate has to be very low—and all the more-skilled people have to be working—before these least-skilled job applicants have any chance at employment. Traditionally, by the time the rate of unemployment got low enough for employers to consider hiring welfare recipients, the Federal Reserve raised the interest rate it charges to raise the unemployment rate and reduce inflationary pressures.

This leaves significant numbers of welfare recipients between a rock and a hard place. They will be denied public assistance for life and they will be unable to find the work needed to adequately support themselves and their families. Eventually we are going to have to resolve this issue.

P.S. "And I Vote!"

We realize that not everyone has time to sit down and compose their own letters, based on the sample letters we provide. However, there are simple ways to add an individualistic touch to our standard letters. One way is to go to our Web site (www.lambdaletters.org), copy the text into your word processor, and then modify our text as you wish to make your own personal statement.

But if you do not have access to the Web—or time to write creatively—there's an easy way to add something personal to our form letters. Below where you sign your name, add a simple P.S. You could add your own two cents to whatever issue we are writing about. You could also simply add "And I vote!" to show your legislator that you do indeed vote, so your voice should be listened to that much more.

Whatever you do, please think of something you can add *by hand* to add a touch of individuality to our sample letters.

Opposing Mandatory Names Reporting

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be deterred (by mandatory names reporting) from testing:

- ♦ In the 1995 study in Los Angeles, participants who self-identified as being at high-risk were significantly more likely to avoid testing under names reporting.

HIV names reporting will delay, not improve, access to treatment for many people with HIV:

- ♦ Individuals who are deterred from testing cannot benefit from early care and treatment. Given the treatments that are now available, it is more important than ever before to minimize barriers to testing and treatment.
- ♦ In the Los Angeles survey, 23 percent of those getting tested said they would not access medical care until they became sick if names-based reporting were implemented.

Mandatory partner notification is misguided and will likely lead to fewer individuals finding out that they are at risk for HIV infection:

- ♦ Trust between public health personnel and HIV-infected individuals is essential in encouraging individuals to inform previous sexual partners about potential exposure to HIV.
- ♦ New York's new law violates this trust and as a result many individuals will be less likely to provide this information because they feel coerced or fear that their name will somehow be revealed when a partner is notified.
- ♦ Voluntary partner notification is a much more effective mechanism to address this problem and is already in place throughout California.

A.B. 1663 would institute a more sound public health policy for obtaining information on the epidemic:

- ♦ A.B. 1663 implements an enhanced HIV reporting system that is non-names-based.
- ♦ Such a system might utilize unique code number that could not be traced back to the individual.
- ♦ Several other states have implemented or are actively considering such systems, including Maryland, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Washington, and Connecticut.
- ♦ Non-names-based reporting would minimize the public health concerns raised by names-based

Combatting Immigrant Bashing

Continued from page 3

ineligible for services. All of this would delay necessary services and probably discourage many people in need from applying for the services in the first place.

Governor Wilson has built a career on creating and encouraging hatred towards immigrants and, by implication, people of color. He has done this in a cynical attempt to motivate white Californians (who are the majority of registered voters) to vote for him. It is time to just say no. It is time for decent Californians to say that we will no longer tolerate such bigotry and that we oppose programs that prohibit the provision of vital medical services to people just because they happen to have been born in another country.

The story of the "Good Samaritan" forms the backbone of many Christian teachings on social justice. In this story a Samaritan, despised by the Jews of his day, finds a man who has been beaten and robbed. He takes the man to an inn, provides him with lodging, food, and medical care. The Samaritan pays for those services out of his own pocket. He does not first ask the victim to provide documentation that he is a legal resident or a citizen. It is this kind of "traditional value" that we should be supporting, not the selfish greedy ethic that says, "He's not a citizen. Let him die."

Assemblymember Gilbert Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) and others have introduced A.B. 2031 to require that medical and social service care be based on need, not place of birth. It deserves our support. Please write to your assemblymember in support of this important bill.

A.B. 2031 is expected to go to the governor for signature soon. Please write to him urging him to sign this bill.

reporting while meeting the need for improved surveillance of HIV disease.

Please tell your own story. Explain the potential negative implications if mandatory names reporting and mandatory partner notification were implemented in California.

(The surveys cited in this article are available at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.)

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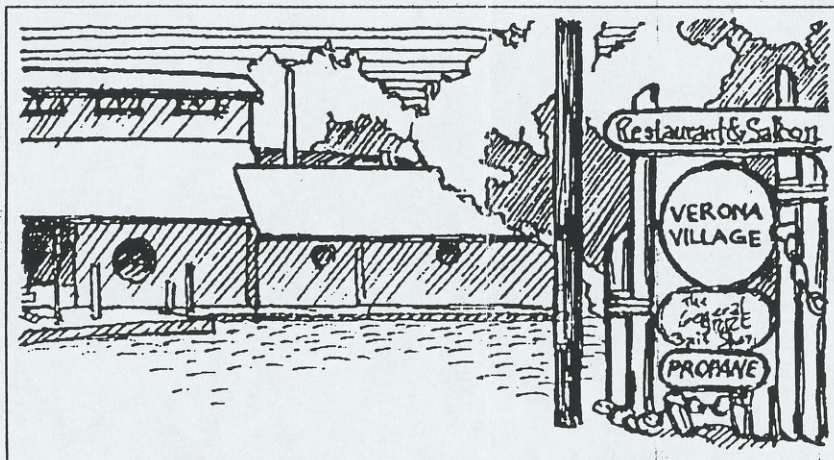
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